GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2084
ANSWERED ON:05.03.2003
UN REPORT ON POPULATION
IQBAL AHMED SARADGI

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any UN report has highlighted `population effect` on growth as reported in the Hindu dated December 5, 2002;

(b) if so, whether the Government have examined the report;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the steps being taken by the Government to implement the suggestions made in the report?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI A. RAJA)

(a) to (c): Yes, Sir. The United Nation Population Fund (UNFPA) Report on `State of World population 2002 - people, poverty and possibilities` addresses population concerns and their relationship with poverty and overall economic development of the people. The major aspects highlighted in the report are as follows:-

(i) There is a `population effect` on economic growth. Developing countries with lower fertility and slower population growth have registered higher productivity resulting in faster economic growth.

(ii) Poor health holds back economic growth. Some of the manifestations of poverty are: more children, ill health, illiteracy, gender inequality, reduced life expectancy, high disease burden, HIV/AIDS etc. adversely affecting their development.

(iii) Educated women have fewer pregnancies leading to women`s empowerment, better health, better education of their children as they know the value of education resulting in reducing level of poverty.

(iv) Governments, communities, the private sector and the international community must cooperate to improve the health of the poor by putting their sustained efforts effectively.

(d) Several steps has been taken to implement the suggestions made in the report, such as:

(i) A comprehensive National Population Policy - 2000 has been adopted by the Government with a package of services and supplies.

(ii) National Commission on Population has been constituted directly under the chairmanship of the Prime Minister with Chief Ministers of all the States/UTs, demographers, non-government organizations and public health professionals as members to advise in operationalising the National Population Policy. Likewise, the establishment of a National Population Stablisation Fund under the chairmanship of the Prime Minister has been approved. This will facilitate mobilisation of resource and greater involvement of the private sector in population stablisation.

(iii) An Empowered Action Group has been constituted under the chairmanship of the Union Health and Family Welfare Minister for focussed attention on improving the coverage and outreach of services in the eight states of Uttar Pradesh, Uttaranchal, Bihar, Jharkhand, Rajasthan, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh and Chattisgarh, involving voluntary associations, community organizations and Panchayati Raj institutions in this national effort.

(iv) In order to arrest the adverse sex ratio, the Pre-natal Diagnostic Techniques Act of 1994 has been subsequently amended providing more stringent punishment for violation of the provisions of the Act, and the enforcement machinery right at district level being suitably trained.

(v) Basket of choice of contraceptives has been enhanced by inclusion of Cu.T 380 A, an improved version of IUDs and Emergency contraceptives pills recently. To enhance male-participation the NO-Scalpel- Vasectomy NSV is being encouraged.

(vi) Resources and skills of the Indian Systems of Medicine are also being utilized in the RCH Programme.

(vii) NGOs participation is being secured through financial assistance being extended to Mother NGOs and field NGOs to undertake

advocacy and social obligations of doctors.